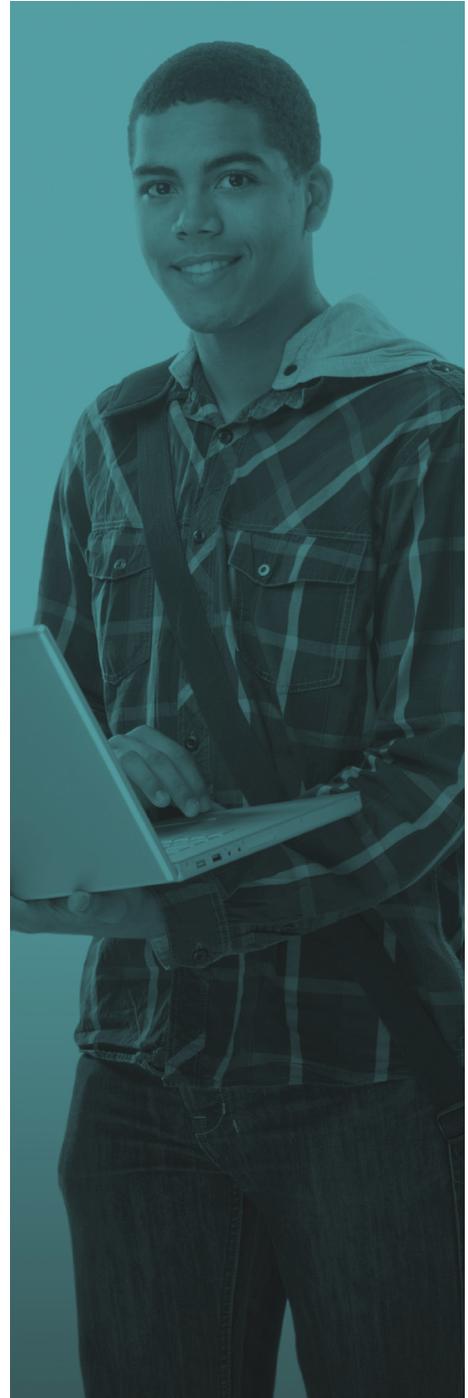


Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative

A Review of Programs and Partners

by Butch Gemin, John Watson



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June 2016



Acknowledgments

The Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative, through the Wisconsin eSchool Network and the Wisconsin Virtual School, provides online and blended learning and support services to over 250 school districts throughout Wisconsin. This report could not have come about without the dedicated efforts of the WDLC partners and team of colleagues who work with us on a regular basis. We are tremendously grateful to them.

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The Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative

The Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative (WDLC) is a unique partnership that gives every school district in the state access to digital learning resources regardless of size, geography or the online and blended learning options desired. The [WDLC](#) represents the interests of all districts by providing access to online courses, instruction, technology, and professional learning. It also leverages shared knowledge and best practices to reduce costs.

The WDLC offers a wide variety of resources, services and benefits that districts need in order to offer online and blended learning options to students (see Table 1 below).

TABLE 1: **WDLC Services and Benefits**

Services	Benefits
Online courses	Over 300 online courses plus additional digital content from multiple vendors
Flexible instruction	Use local instructors or shared statewide WDLC partner instructors
Local control	Districts can develop their own online and blended courses and combine them with WDLC courses.
Cost savings	WDLC purchasing power and subsidies reduce partner costs to give districts the greatest value
Professional learning for online and blended learning	Access professional learning communities, knowledge sharing, training events, and facilitated online courses

The WDLC consists of three collaborating organizations. The [Wisconsin Virtual School](#) (WVS) provides supplemental online courses to school districts across Wisconsin. The [Wisconsin eSchool Network](#) (WEN) is a consortium of 28 district partners that provides access to online courses, technology, operational support and other services. Together WEN and WVS form the foundation of the Collaborative. The third organization, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), provides quality assurance and helps raise awareness of WDLC. It also provides some fiscal support through the segregated universal service fund administered by the Wisconsin Department of Administration. WEN, WVS and DPI signed a memorandum of agreement in 2012 to operate collaboratively under the umbrella of the Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative (WDLC). WDLC fulfills DPI's [legislative requirement](#) to provide the Wisconsin Web Academy to Wisconsin stakeholders.

The Wisconsin eSchool Network began as a collaboration between the Kiel and Appleton Area School Districts in 2002. It became a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization in 2011 and has four full-time staff maintaining all operational components of the organization. WEN acts as the operational arm of the consortium, contracting with online learning content and technology vendors to meet the needs of its members, while leveraging shared knowledge, reduced costs and best practices across the district partners. WEN coordinates a network of online teachers supplied by WEN partners, but does not employ teachers. Partners retain responsibility for all academic and instructional components of their local programs.

Wisconsin Virtual School originated out of the Cooperative Educational Services Area 9 (CESA 9) and has partnered with school districts to deliver supplemental online courses for well over a decade. WVS provides access to online courses in almost any subject area and provides districts direct support with course registration, facilitated student orientation, online teachers, Local Education Guide technical support and training. Additionally, WVS provides professional learning opportunities for online and local teachers, local education guides, and administrators. WVS became a WEN member in 2013, greatly enhancing the efficiencies and value created by the WDLC partnership.

This report focuses on online and blended learning activities of the WDLC and partner districts. It includes a number of terms that will be familiar to those involved with online learning, but may not be familiar to other readers. A glossary of key terms is provided at the end of this report.

The WDLC Pathways to Digital Learning

Through the WDLC partnership WEN and WVS created three pathways to cover the broad range of digital learning needs within school districts.

The Supplemental Pathway appeals to districts that wish to offer online courses to its students. It offers a high level of access to online courses and support through WVS without the need for formal membership in WEN and without the need to build online learning capacity locally. It is a pay as you go option to add online courses to existing middle or high school curriculum with no annual fees, contracts or memberships. WVS is the primary provider of supplemental online courses for the WDLC.

The Affiliate Pathway is appropriate for districts ready to take on more control and ownership of their program as they become members in the WEN consortium. Affiliate Partner districts have access to WEN's online course catalog, licensed teachers, technology tools, student orientation courses and professional learning while benefitting from lower cost, scalable enrollment fees. The Affiliate membership allows districts to retain a high degree of local control, using a combination of local instructors with online teachers from Network partners as needed.

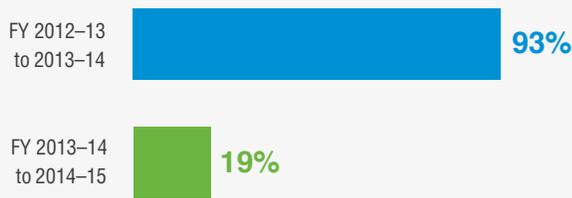
The Invested Pathway is designed for members with a comprehensive plan for online and blended learning that includes an emphasis on local autonomy and use of local teachers and staff. Invested Partners make a significant one-time investment that provides the lowest operating expenses of any pathway and a voting seat on the WEN board of directors. Invested Partners are building scalable digital learning programs to support growing online enrollments, increased use of student devices on campus and greater integration of digital content and instruction in the classroom. One of the most powerful benefits WEN affords Invested Partners is the opportunity for teachers and staff to collaborate with peers facing the same challenges and implementation issues. Invested Partners also contribute to the direction of online learning practice and policy at the state and local level.

WDLC by the numbers

The WDLC is making a positive impact on the growth of online and blended learning in Wisconsin. Two common measures used to analyze the growth of online learning are the number of course enrollments and the number of unique students taking online courses during a school year. One course enrollment is defined as a single semester-long course taken by one student. A unique student is one individual student, who may take any number of online courses.

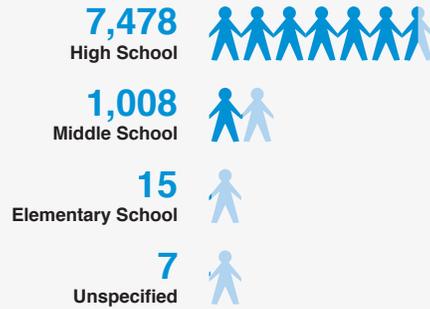
In the three years since the WDLC partnership has aggregated the districts served by WEN and WVS, course enrollments have increased 129% and the number of students has grown 124%.

FIGURE 1: WDLC course enrollment growth of all partners



Year-over-year course enrollment growth from FY2012-13 through FY 2014-15

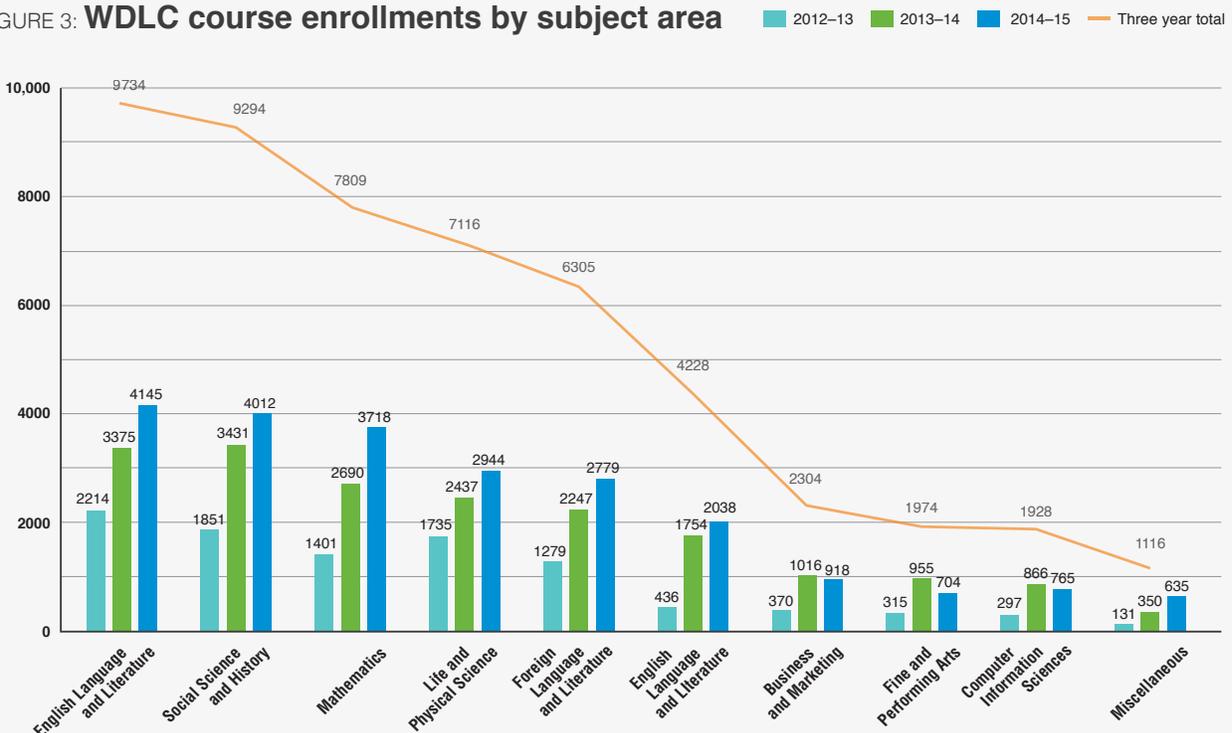
FIGURE 2: Total unique students enrolled in online courses through all WDLC partners



The number of course enrollments and unique students taking online courses through the WDLC is growing in FY 2015–2016, but data are incomplete at this time. Data presented in this report correspond to the fiscal calendar of July 1–June 30 and is presented as fiscal year (FY). Summer school enrollments are counted in the fiscal year in which the summer session begins.

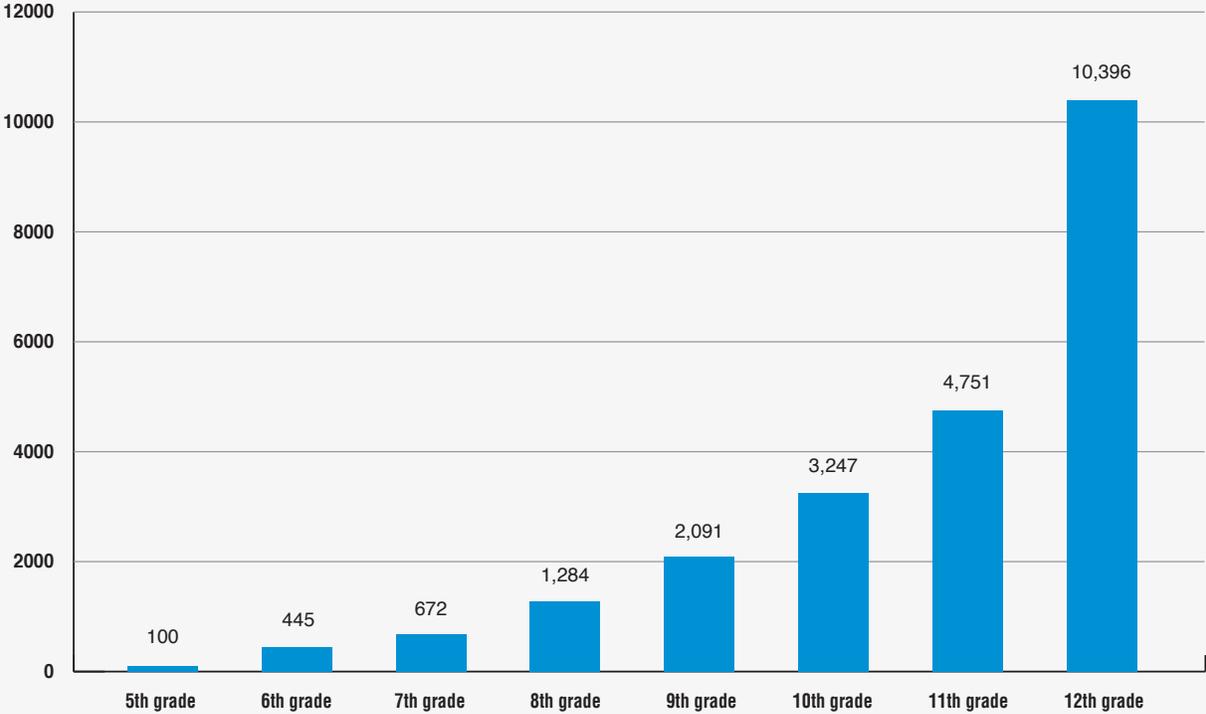
Data provided by WDLC districts show how online course usage breaks down by subject area and grade level. The core subject areas of English Language and Literature, Social Science and History, and Mathematics make up 52% of all WDLC course enrollments. Physical, Health and Safety Education make up 13% of all WDLC course enrollments and Life and Physical Science make up 12%. Foreign Languages and Literature make up 9% of total course enrollments.

FIGURE 3: WDLC course enrollments by subject area



Following national trends, the bulk of WDLC course enrollments are in high school grades, with 45% of all enrollments in grade 12 and another 21% in grade 11.

FIGURE 4: **WDLC course enrollments by grade level**



Seven subject areas not represented in this chart accounted for an additional 598 course enrollments.

Schools and districts use a variety of digital learning resources for online learning, in the classroom and across a campus. The WDLC continues to expand its offerings to better meet the demands of each district and partner. The data presented here represent students enrolling in online courses available to them from their WDLC pathway of choice. However, some districts with unique needs contract with vendors other than WDLC. A school or district may be using digital resources outside of WDLC for credit recovery, alternative education or other programs. The data in this report do not include enrollments or use of digital products licensed and implemented by the district outside of WDLC.

The Invested Pathway

The Invested Pathway gives districts with mature online and blended learning programs an opportunity to realize greater local autonomy, cost savings and collaboration. Currently, there are 14 Invested Partners that have made significant initial investments in human capital and in financial resources to purchase online courses, license and develop technology infrastructure and build processes that are the foundation of the consortium and the WDLC. Invested Partner course enrollments reached 21,784 in FY 2014–2015 with 7,879 students taking online courses.

Invested Partner districts (Table 2 below) come in all sizes and from all corners of Wisconsin. Eight of the ten largest school districts in the state are Invested Partners, while several have fewer than 2,000 students. One is a CESA. Many Invested Partners have developed authorized virtual charter schools that supply the online learning needs of the district, while others have integrated online learning services into the schools in the district. Some focus on building local teacher capacity, while others use WEN for teaching the majority of the online enrollments. Some focus entirely on resident students while others embrace a philosophy of providing access to online learning for students across Wisconsin. Regardless of approach, size or community composition, all share a long-term commitment to grow and implement digital learning programs rooted in local autonomy.

TABLE 2: **Invested Partner districts**

School District	Total District Students (FY 2013–2014)	Community Served	Has Virtual Charter School(s)	WEN Partner Since
Appleton Area School District	16,224	City, small	Yes	2002
Baraboo School District	3,110	Rural	No	2007
Grantsburg School District	1,536	Rural	Yes	2012
Green Bay Area Public School District	21,006	City, midsize	No	2011
School District of Janesville	10,390	City, small	Yes	2006
Kenosha Unified School District	22,602	City, midsize	Yes	2006
Kiel Area School District	1,396	Rural	Yes	2002
Kimberly Area School District	4,913	Suburb	No	2006
Madison Metropolitan School District	27,181	City, large	No	2007
Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District	6,654	Suburb	Yes	2010
Oshkosh Area School District	9,953	City, small	No	2012
Racine Unified School District	20,301	City, small	No	2011
Sheboygan Area School District	10,288	City, small	Yes	2006
Wisconsin Virtual School	N/A	CESA	No	2013

District types are based on state locale classifications originally developed by National Center for Educational Statistics

Each of the 14 Invested Partners is profiled on the following pages, providing program detail, highlights and innovation. Please note that the FTE staffing number presented includes administration, support and teachers budgeted and dedicated to the online program. In addition, some online teachers are paid per course enrollment or as an overload, and as such are not considered program FTE in this report.

Appleton Area SCHOOL DISTRICT

COURSE ENROLLMENTS: 1,140 (FY 2014–2015)
NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 746 (FY 2014–2015)
GRADE LEVELS SERVED: 7–12
GROWTH RATE: 32% (from FY 2012–2014 course enrollments)
STAFFING: 4.6 FTE

The Appleton Area School District's Appleton eSchool charter school is the primary provider of online courses across the district, and is a founding member of the Wisconsin eSchool Network. It provides supplemental online courses, full-time online options and support for blended learning opportunities in the classroom. It uses local district teachers for approximately 79% of its online enrollments and relies on WEN for electives and courses not available within the district.

The Appleton Area School District (AASD) is one of the only districts in the state that has two virtual charter schools. The Wisconsin Connections Academy (also authorized by AASD) serves full-time students across Wisconsin. The Appleton eSchool enrolls between 25 and 40 full-time students each year as well as students taking supplemental online courses.



AASD's membership in WEN has provided valuable collaboration and cost savings in a number of ways according to Erik Hanson, Dean of Digital Learning at Appleton eSchool. "WEN gives us a single access point to digital content. The fact that WEN handles all of the contracts and paperwork helps us focus more time with the kids, families and teachers. The WEN model gives Appleton the ability to share teaching staff and scale course offerings at the local level, particularly to offer low enrollment courses within the WEN statewide offerings. As a partnership, we are learning as we grow together."

One key to the success of the Appleton online program is its student onboarding process. All course enrollment requests must be approved by a school counselor to ensure the course is part of and consistent with the student's academic plan. Both student and parent must sign a contract that outlines the requirements of taking an online course. Finally, each student must successfully complete an online orientation course designed to prepare students to be successful online learners. In most cases students are required to start at the eSchool by taking a single online course. After successful completion of one online course, a student can take multiple online courses concurrently during a semester. The eSchool completion rate for online learners, excluding excused and Network withdrawals, has improved from 90.5% in FY 2010-2011 to 93.9% in FY 2014–2015.

AASD strongly encourages students to participate in an online experience for graduation, but has not established a graduation requirement. The eSchool has a goal that 80-90% of graduating seniors will complete an eSchool course by the FY 2018-2019. This goal is supported by the charter school Governing Board and AASD school board.

AASD has an Online Course Ready badge program that places an easily identifiable credential on the official transcript of qualifying students. About one-third of all college course enrollments in the US are now online. This badge alerts educators and employers that the student has a proven level of online learning experience.

Enrollment is expected to grow now that eSchool courses are integrated into the district's course registration system. Online courses are now more identifiable and available to all students as part of the main district wide course registration process.

The Appleton eSchool is the online learning hub of the Fox Valley Summer School Consortium, which provides online summer school courses to district students in grades 9–12. AASD and ten additional regional districts, make up the Fox Valley Consortium, which provided nearly 400 course enrollments across the district in summer 2015 with a 95% completion rate.

The eSchool is coordinated by a full-time Dean of Digital Learning who oversees both students and instructional support and training. The Dean of Digital Learning has a full-time secretary who acts as registrar, proctor for final exams, student data and information assistant, and many more roles. Three part-time coaches support online students. One coach works solely with eSchool students across the district. Another part-time coach works with online students at North High School and a third part-time coach works with online students at West High School. The eSchool instructional staff consists of 2.8 FTE spread across subject areas including social studies, science, physical education, math, English, Personal Finance and Career and Technical Education. The administrator of record for the eSchool is the East High School Principal, who is not part of the school's budgeted FTE. The eSchool has quarterly staffing reviews to determine if additional staff are needed to meet student demand. Starting with the FY 2015–2016, each of the three AASD high schools are contributing at least 0.4 FTE each to support and fund students taking classes online.

Baraboo SCHOOL DISTRICT

COURSE ENROLLMENTS: 281 (FY 2014–2015)

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 198 (FY 2014–2015)

GRADE LEVELS SERVED: 8–12

GROWTH RATE: 187% (from FY 2012–2014 course enrollments)

STAFFING: 1.0 FTE

The Baraboo School District's Baraboo Virtual Campus (BVC) program has offered supplemental courses for district students since 2010 and began serving a few full-time online resident students in grades 9–12 during Spring 2016. Baraboo plans to explore full-time options for middle school and elementary levels for Baraboo resident students. The Baraboo School District (BSD) does not have a virtual charter school. Supplemental course enrollments in FY 2015–2016 more than doubled the enrollments in FY 2014–2015.



BSD has been expanding the online course availability and delivery options since becoming a WEN member. “Our partnership with Wisconsin eSchool Network and the Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative has proven to be invaluable in our efforts to grow our online and blended programs,” according to Shelly Gillmore, Online Coordinator at Baraboo. “This partnership allows us to share resources and teachers across the state to support individual student needs. We would never be able to sustain these efforts as an individual district.”

Experience, developed by offering supplemental online courses, has helped the district grow its approach to personalized learning and blended learning instruction. Baraboo is encouraging innovative teachers to explore and adopt new instructional models in their classrooms by providing administrative support, online content, student devices, and technology infrastructure. BVC helped spearhead implementation of blended learning strategies in Computer Science and Game Design during FY 2012–2013 using online content and teacher support through WEN. Blended learning instruction has expanded to some Social Studies classes and credit recovery and accrual courses over the summer months for grades 9–12. In the required Economics course, one teacher started using an online course to supplement his classroom instruction with freshmen in Spring 2015. The experience was so positive that he expanded use of online content to three sections of Economics during the current school year. With the BSD commitment to provide all students with Chromebooks for the FY 2016–2017, this teacher will have about 250 students learning through a blended model this fall. The WDLC financially supplemented blended learning courses in FY 2015–2016 with costs scheduled to be borne by the district in future years. Funding, previously allocated to vendor curriculum, will be redistributed to support enrollments in the WDLC blended program.

Baraboo has one full-time program coordinator who oversees students and instructional support/training and who acts as registrar and digital learning coach for the Virtual Campus. There are no full-time online teachers, but there are up to 15 part-time online teachers. High school teachers work with online students as needed as part of their school day duties and as teaching schedules permit. School principals and the BVC Online Coordinator work together to ensure that proper certification to teach online is in place. At the middle school level, an online teacher receives a stipend to teach online students in addition to contracted school day responsibilities.

Baraboo District administrative support has been a critical aspect of the success of online learning in the district. With the support of the district administrator, Baraboo completed a collaborative review of online learning policy in 2016 involving a team of district staff and participants from WEN, WVS, and the DPI.

Baraboo High School has maintained a designated computer lab, supervised by an online teacher who serves as a learning coach to offer students the option of a supervised space to complete their online coursework while on campus. With the 1:1 rollout in fall 2016, it is likely this space will shift to the library media center or to a traditional classroom. Online students at Jack Young Middle School are required to work at the school as well as at home. Again, a designated classroom space is available where students access content on a personal device issued by the district as part of its 1:1 program. The classroom is supervised by two educational assistants who fill the role of learning coach.

Grantsburg

SCHOOL DISTRICT

COURSE ENROLLMENTS: 7,707 (FY 2014–2015)
NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 610 (FY 2014–2015)
GRADE LEVELS SERVED: 6–12
GROWTH RATE: 118% (from FY 2012–2014 course enrollments)
STAFFING: 10.0 FTE

The Grantsburg School District's iForward virtual charter school is in its ninth year of offering full-time online options for students in grades 6–12. iForward also serves the needs of resident students by providing supplemental online course options. Grantsburg has one of the larger full-time online schools in the state with about 550 students representing almost every county in Wisconsin. High school students make up about 80% of current full-time enrollments, but the middle school program is expanding.

The Grantsburg School District started the Grantsburg Virtual Charter school in 2002, and transferred management of the school to a private provider in 2007. In 2012, Grantsburg School District reassumed management to gain a greater level of control over the program and changed the school's name to iForward.

A majority of iForward enrollments are at-risk students who have not had success in the traditional classroom setting for a variety of reasons. Many have been bullied or intimidated, an increasing number have health issues including depression and anxiety, and other students are pregnant or have small children. In addition, some iForward students are high achieving students who want access to accelerated options. For these high-achieving students, iForward has recently added a suite of career preparatory courses designed to offer college credits and allow students to make progress on a college degree while still in high school. The iForward graduation rate has climbed to just over 50% for FY 2015–2016 (while supporting an open door policy) from a rate of 25% five years ago.

"The iForward school has greatly impacted our very small district," said Billy Beesley, Principal and Executive Director of iForward. "We've been able to reach out to all of Wisconsin families to offer them a new way of educating the youth of our state."

iForward fosters student interaction both instructionally and socially. iForward is one of a few online programs among WEN members to retain a fixed schedule and cohort model, which mirrors those of all Grantsburg schools and has helped build peer-to-peer interaction and improve student socialization. Some online classes meet online at a set time every day for a live lesson using video chat. Maintaining the daily schedule is demanding for the teachers and students but the direct instruction provides the structure many full-time students need and reinforces the value of students moving through courses as cohorts.

With so many students from outside the Grantsburg District, iForward has developed an extensive program to build relationships with face-to-face events and online activities. These include field trips, such as Milwaukee Brewers games, the annual prom, and plenty of online student groups to choose from including the Stock Market Club, Photography Club, and National Honor Society. Students can serve on the iForward Student Council or take an active role in the school newspaper or broadcasting program.



One key to iForward's success has been the retention of its online teachers and ongoing staff collaboration. The school has three full-time and 27 part-time teachers. Nine of the iForward teachers have been with the program for nine years and new hires, over the past two years, have only been made to address enrollment growth, not to replace departed teachers. iForward uses online teacher training from WEN and participates in WEN PLCs. It also has a strong internal collaboration process for teachers. The iForward teaching staff meets online every other Monday evening (Packer games permitting) to exchange ideas, address policy issues or learn more about new technology tools. In addition to the instructional staff, iForward has seven administration and support FTE.

“Our partnership with WEN and the WDLC frees up substantial time that we’d have to spend organizing, purchasing, and implementing all of the systems we use to support online learning,” notes Mr. Beesley. “Sharing teachers for supplemental courses is a great advantage and benefit to our partners.”

Green Bay Area PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

COURSE ENROLLMENTS: 283 (FY 2014–2015)

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 227 (FY 2014–2015)

GRADE LEVELS SERVED: 9–12 *some middle school students taking high school-level courses*

GROWTH RATE: over 1000% (from FY 2012–2014 course enrollments)

STAFFING: 1.2 FTE

Green Bay Area Public School District (GBAPS) began offering online courses to its students in 2008, responding to requests from students for courses not available in their schools. GBAPS joined WEN in 2011 to significantly expand the range of courses available to students, to ensure courses were high quality, and to access additional support and services. The program's focus is on providing student access to courses not available at district high schools, supporting accelerated learning and enrichment, and offering core courses to non-traditional students and those in unusual circumstances. GBAPS also has a credit recovery program using web-based courseware apart from WEN. (The course enrollment data in this report does not reflect the number of students in credit recovery.)

Most GBAPS online courses use teachers offered through the Network. The district has also offered local online course sections taught by GBAPS teachers in the summer school program. There is a growing recognition of the value of GBAPS teachers. Using GBAPS teachers assures curricular alignment with district goals, allows local teachers to expand their skills, increases online learning capacity for the district, and provides incremental cost benefits. Locally taught courses are expected to grow, particularly in Advanced Placement, Computer Science and Physical Education where enrollments and teacher interest are high.

Green Bay Online Learning has one full-time Program Support Teacher to coordinate the program and provide operational oversight of the credit recovery program. Other Green Bay Online Learning staff includes a part-time Local Education Guide (LEG), who coaches and supports online students, a part-time network teacher committed to WEN sections, and eight local part-time online teachers who support summer school. Staff and teacher training are conducted largely by the Program Support Teacher, including one-on-one training with the learning management system (LMS) and on the processes and policies supporting online instruction. Ongoing PD is provided through WEN, e.g., Green Bay Online Learning is particularly active in WEN's science professional learning community (PLC).



Alison Manwiller, Program Support Teacher for the online program, notes. “WEN gives us ongoing opportunities for professional learning, content-specific professional learning communities and a highly responsive support team. We also have easy access to student, financial, and program data. Our biggest challenge has been determining the correct path to scale our growth to go beyond a supplemental program through WEN. Looking to the future, two departments, Teaching & Learning and Technology, are working collaboratively to create a framework to guide the growth of digital learning at GBAPSD. We hope to see blended and online courses as part of the day-to-day fabric of the high school experience.”

GBAPS credits much of its student success in online courses to the guidance offered by school counselors and the LEG coaching model, which offers support to all prospective online students and fosters student achievement. Referrals to participate in an online course must be initiated by the student's school counselor following an application and contract submission, along with the recommendation of the home school's Intervention/Consultation Team. All students entering the online program are also required to successfully complete an orientation course for online learners. The Orientation describes the necessary technology skills for course navigation and use of communication tools. The Program Support Teacher takes a proactive approach to track student progress across the entire program, monitoring real-time student data in both the student information system and LMS. Online teachers and support staff communicate regularly with students and parents when necessary.

The program currently measures success based on completion rates. The focus of program-student communication is on the learning and for students to have control of and take responsibility for their own learning, not just on grades or completion. Students have a two-week drop window for online courses. Students must complete a minimum of 90% of all coursework and have passing test scores to register a completion.

The School District of Janesville has offered online options for students since 2007. Janesville's ARISE Virtual Academy (AVA) is a virtual charter school that enrolls full-time students and provides supplemental courses to students. Some students are district residents while others reside in other districts. Students served by AVA include 140 full-time online students in grades K–12 annually, about 60% of which are District of Janesville residents, and about 100 resident students in grades 6–12 who take supplemental online courses. In addition to the benefits to district students, administrators believe that the availability of AVA online learning services allows the district to retain students who otherwise might have left the district to take online courses or attend an online school elsewhere.

A majority of AVA students (about 70%, including a small number of special needs students) have chosen the school as an alternative to a traditional classroom because of social anxiety and/or behavioral issues. ARISE works with district elementary schools to provide face-to-face instruction in some subject areas. Students do the majority of coursework at home, but attend selected classes like music on campus. AVA uses WEN curriculum for middle and high school courses and curriculum from outside vendors for full-time elementary students. Elementary and middle school online courses are taught by Janesville teachers. High school courses use a combination of local teachers and WEN teachers.



A critical factor in creating student success in the full-time online environment is parental involvement. District leaders believe that a direct correlation exists between the success rate of students and the strength of parents. ARISE staff works with parents to build confidence and provide support for those who feel challenged by the academics. ARISE staff meets with elementary school parents for at least two hours each week, with even more time and attention paid to struggling parents. AVA often covers students' lessons with parents a week or more in advance to help parents work with their children.

AVA has a current graduation rate of 97% among its full-time online students, an increase of 47 percentage points over of the past four years. One reason for the success rate is the attention given students during an initial probationary period, a policy that requires student participation and engagement when they first enroll in the school. Resident students have a two-week probationary period and there is a one-week period for students outside the district. When students struggle, AVA works with parents and principals to find the best solution for each student. AVA also has over a 90% completion for all online course enrollments, including probationary students.

AVA has built its staff to address the needs of its students, including a full-time Special Education teacher, as well as a part-time Social Worker and part-time Student Service Specialist. The AVA principal is paid a supplement in addition to his/her administrative duties elsewhere in the district and is not part of the AVA staffing FTE. AVA currently has three full-time online teachers, one full-time secretary, and six part-time staff members that in total account for 6.2 FTE. Staff members see their compensation increase with increased enrollments.

AVA has developed a number of innovative approaches to serve and attract unique students. The school staff was first introduced to a Janesville manufacturer with business ties to Zhenjiang in Jiangsu Province in China, which has led to private pay Chinese students taking AVA online courses year-round from their homes in Zhenjiang. In addition, several Chinese students come to Janesville for the summer and a few months in the fall/winter of their junior year, then return to spend their entire senior year in Janesville. AVA is also exploring private pay agreements with education programs in Abu Dhabi, Chile, Argentina, and Moscow, and the school's first Russian student will be enrolled for Fall 2016. AVA has also created an internship program with about 20 local employers to help working high school seniors by providing flexible online course schedules to allow students to progress toward a diploma while in the workforce.

“AVA has enjoyed the ongoing partnership with WEN and the WDLC,” noted David Parr, Dean of Students, Mentor and Teacher at AVA. “The collaboration experience has been very beneficial to stay abreast of new and emerging trends related to online learning, receive a cost savings through the course licensing agreements, and participate in Professional Learning Communities with colleagues in the similar educational models.”

Kenosha Unified SCHOOL DISTRICT

COURSE ENROLLMENTS: 2,656 (FY 2014–2015)
NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 1,024 (FY 2014–2015)
GRADE LEVELS SERVED: K–12
GROWTH RATE: 11% (from FY 2012–2014 course enrollments)
STAFFING: 15.0 FTE

The Kenosha Unified School District (KUSD) offers online courses and a full-time online school through the Kenosha eSchool. The eSchool is a virtual charter school authorized by KUSD in 2007. During FY 2014–2015, the Kenosha eSchool had about 1,024 students and over 2,600 course enrollments. Students are in grades K through 12 and complete all their courses online, with the exception of high school final exams and standardized tests, which are administered at the eSchool building.

The Kenosha eSchool works very closely with KUSD, serving both full-time students, who take all of their courses online, and students taking supplemental courses. Fifteen percent of students are full-time online students and 85% are supplemental online students.

The eSchool employs 15 staff members, including 10 full-time online teachers from KUSD, the eSchool principal, a counselor, a teacher consultant, a secretary, and a student support specialist. Four extended-day teachers assist in specific content areas such as Art, German, and Psychology. Extended day instructors teach full-time at another KUSD school and take on additional online students as an overload for extra compensation. The eSchool has benefitted from strong leadership and a collaborative relationship with building administrators and teachers across the district. The program's principal, Daniel Tenuta, was previously an assistant superintendent bringing extensive experience in school operations and integrating online learning across the district.

The eSchool started with grades 9–12 before expanding into the middle and elementary levels to support the district plan to expand opportunities for younger students. Each of the five, comprehensive district middle schools

has a dedicated computer lab for students taking online courses. Most of the supplemental enrollments are elective courses, such as art or world languages, and are integrated into students' daily schedules. Kenosha eSchool has its own computer lab to provide a workspace for online teachers to meet face-to-face with students during office hours, a place for students to take final exams, and a secure setting to administer required standardized testing.

The Kenosha eSchool's eElementary K-5 program began in 2012. The eElementary program is staffed with full-time eSchool teachers using curriculum from vendors outside WEN who specialize in elementary online content. These elementary enrollments are not reflected in the course enrollments used for this report. Elementary and middle school instruction is split between two K-8 teachers. At the middle school level, one of those teachers focuses on math and social studies, the other concentrates on science and English.

Professional learning for eSchool teachers has been closely linked to the district teacher evaluation process, which uses Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching model. The eSchool administration identified best practices for online instruction and how they related to the best practices in the Danielson model. Training was then developed to correlate online instruction to the Danielson evaluation criteria. The eSchool also adheres to the iNACOL standards for quality online teaching.



In addition to the online courses that WEN provides, the eSchool finds that professional support for teachers provided by WEN is critical to the school's success. This is especially true in situations where a teacher does not have many district colleagues working with online courses in the same subject area. The district's involvement in WEN allows the teachers to participate in a content area professional learning community (PLC) to network with colleagues across member districts with similar experiences, instructional ideas and shared content strategies.

Kiel Area

SCHOOL DISTRICT

COURSE ENROLLMENTS: 541 (FY 2014–2015)

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 346 (FY 2014–2015)

GRADE LEVELS SERVED: 7–12

GROWTH RATE: over 68% (from FY 2012–2014 course enrollments)

STAFFING: 1.0 FTE

The Kiel Area School District (KASD) has provided students with online learning options since 2002 and was a founding member of the Wisconsin eSchool Network. The district created one of the first virtual charter schools in the state to offer students a full-time online education and became the Kiel eSchool in 2005. Most students who take online courses attend physical schools in KASD and take online courses to supplement their class schedules. Almost 350 students took online courses during FY 2014–2015. Much of KASD course enrollment growth since FY 2012–2013 has come through an increase in blended learning applications. The eSchool enrolls a few full-time online students each year, however, the program’s goal is to transition those students into the traditional school setting. In keeping with the school’s focus on supplemental online courses, the Kiel Area School District instituted an online course graduation requirement for all Kiel High School students in 2009.



Katrina Pionek, a Mentor/Teacher with the eSchool, explains how important the eSchool is to the district. “Our district serves a wide range of students and gives them the opportunity to get an education that fits their needs. The eSchool serves students who are credit deficient so they can graduate on time, as well as students who are gifted and talented where the face-to-face classes are not available. There are students dealing with medical issues, social issues, issues at home and schedule conflicts, particularly for students involved in band and chorus.”

Students may start a Kiel eSchool course at any time of the year, subject to local teacher availability. The eSchool uses local teachers for online courses in the core subject areas and uses WEN teachers for students with special interests, particularly for elective and world language courses.

The Kiel eSchool Principal, Kiel District Administrator, and Governing Board oversee Kiel eSchool. Many Kiel eSchool staff positions are combined with other district responsibilities. Counselors, secretaries, school psychologists, principals, school nurses, and others supplement their district responsibilities with their eSchool roles. In addition to these dual-role positions, the Kiel eSchool has one full-time Local/Mentor Teacher and seven part-time teachers. All Kiel online teachers go through the WEN Online Facilitation course, and are teamed with an experienced, practicing online teacher before working directly with online students. Kiel teachers are also active in WEN PLCs and there is a Parent Advisory Council that meets three times a year.

One key to the eSchool success is the Local Mentor/Teacher. All online students meet with the Local/Mentor Teacher at the beginning of the course for a face-to-face orientation and then they meet weekly until the course is completed. The Local Mentor/Teacher monitors student progress and makes a personal connection with students on a weekly basis. This has helped keep the online course success rate at Kiel eSchool above 90%. To pass, students must complete online coursework with a score of 70% or better, and successfully complete a proctored semester exam.

“Being able to place students in statewide sections with other WEN partners allows us to provide a variety of courses,” says Pionek. “As an Invested Partner, we have a voice in the direction of where the WEN and WDLG are going. We can express our needs as a district.”

KASD has made technology infrastructure improvements to support the implementation of a 1:1 Chromebook program for students in grades 8–12, starting during FY 2015–2016. Students are allowed to take the devices home. A few of the eSchool teachers have used the skills they developed teaching online in their face-to-face classrooms, integrating WEN curriculum, etextbooks and other digital resources. Some face-to-face classes combine online lessons with meeting teachers on campus in a hybrid blended learning model.

Kimberly SCHOOL DISTRICT

COURSE ENROLLMENTS: 17 (FY 2014–2015)

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 12 (FY 2014–2015)

GRADE LEVELS SERVED: 9–12

GROWTH RATE: 750% (from FY 2012–2014 course enrollments)

STAFFING: No dedicated staff



Kimberly Area School District (KASD) provides high school students with online options to fill a gap in a student’s class schedule or to provide electives not available within the district. All online courses are through WEN, using teachers from member districts. The breadth of the Network course catalog gives KASD the flexibility to offer students the courses they need. For example, nearly half of the course enrollments in FY 2014–2015 were in honors and Advanced Placement courses, but in FY 2015–2016, enrollments were mostly in Personal Finance and Social Studies with only a few Advanced Placement enrollments. KASD does not have a virtual charter school and currently has no full-time online students.

Students are enrolled in supplemental courses on a case-by-case basis after consulting with the high school counselor. The counselor then monitors student progress and helps the student meet course deadlines. Some students work online with the Network teacher independently, while others may need face-to-face meetings with the counselor. The level of coaching is dependent on the student. The Kimberly High School guidance counselor coordinates online enrollments. Currently there is no position solely dedicated to the online program.

First-time online students must complete an online orientation process, which may include an evening meeting with the online instructor. Home-schooled students may enroll in KASD and apply for online classes in order to obtain necessary credits, although no home school students are currently in the Kimberly online program.

KASD began issuing Chromebooks to students in grades 5-8 in 2014 as part of the district’s three-year technology plan. At the end of eighth grade, students have the opportunity to keep their device and use it during high school or purchase their own device. High school students are encouraged to “bring your own device” (BYOD) to campus to access online content assigned by teachers. The school provides a computer lab, access to devices in the library, and limited access to devices that can be checked out. Students are sometimes given a block schedule period they can use to work on their classwork outside of the school day.

Madison Metropolitan SCHOOL DISTRICT

COURSE ENROLLMENTS: 521 (FY 2014–2015)
NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 413 (FY 2014–2015)
GRADE LEVELS SERVED: 6–12
GROWTH RATE: 46% (from FY 2012–2014 course enrollments)
STAFFING: 2.1 FTE

The Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) has been offering students online learning options for more than ten years and has been an Invested Partner in WEN since 2007. MMSD's Madison Virtual Campus (MVC) provides online courses used in both online and blended learning formats for all middle and high school students in the district. Students take online courses to supplement their classes at their local schools. The district does not have a virtual charter school or any full-time online students.

The majority of supplemental online course enrollments are high school students looking for original credit courses to address scheduling conflicts and courses needed to graduate. Most middle school students taking online course are advanced learners in search of high school level math courses or world language courses. MMSD uses WEN for its supplemental online courses and contracts with a variety of vendors to supply digital learning programs for credit recovery, alternative, and special education programs throughout the district.

Currently, there is greater student demand for online courses than seats available. Online enrollment is capped on a per school or per program basis, limited in part by budget and by availability of mentor/teachers at each school. These online course enrollment limitations are addressed by a consistent, collaborative approach for approving or denying student requests. That is, to help prioritize requests, MVC staff, school counselors, instructional resource teachers, and other school staff work jointly to recommend students for online courses, based on a tiered list of "compelling needs."



"One of the most positive impacts of this program is its ability to provide credit for students who are unable to attend school every day," said Meri Tunison, MVC Teacher Leader and WEN District Liaison. "Students who face mental health challenges or are in alternative programs due to work and family obligations really benefit from access to online courses. We are also beginning to see how an online or blended approach to instruction can assist with shortages in licensed staffing, equity in advanced learning possibilities, and new and engaging curriculum options for career-focused pathways."

The Director of Instructional Technology at MMSD is the MVC Program Leader and oversees online and blended learning across the district. MVC has one full-time Teacher Leader who supports the Program Leader, serves as District Liaison to WEN and acts as mentor/coach for online middle school students and students in alternative programs. MVC also has three full-time online teachers plus a part-time MVC/Online Programs Specialist, who supports the district's online credit recovery and special education programs. In addition, four part-time Online Mentor Teachers are based at each comprehensive high school and work closely with school counselors to gather, track, and prioritize student course requests for MVC. Mentors are the Orientation teachers for their school's students and handle registration and grading in Infinite Campus.

Online teaching and mentor staff support is an ongoing budgetary challenge. MVC teachers and mentors are compensated for their online learning duties as part of their FTE or as an overload. A portion of MVC staff pay is covered by the district with the rest coming from the school. Currently, there is not an option to pay teachers on a per enrollment basis. In the summer only, mentors and teachers are paid the hourly rate for extended contract work, which is calculated at approximately \$55 per hour, but may be less depending on salary schedule position.

The Madison Metropolitan School District continues to implement a three-year online learning plan. This plan encompasses an expansion of online local teachers and courses, blended course options and virtual learning spaces to connect learning across our district and world. Partnering with WEN has provided opportunities for students to access content and experiences for future readiness.

Middleton-Cross Plains Area SCHOOL DISTRICT

COURSE ENROLLMENTS: 818 (FY 2014–2015)

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 319 (FY 2014–2015)

GRADE LEVELS SERVED: K–12

GROWTH RATE: 76% (from FY 2012–2014 course enrollments)

STAFFING: 5.2 FTE

The Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District (MCPASD) has provided online options for students via the district's 21st Century eSchool since 2010. The eSchool is a virtual charter school with about 60 full-time online students, almost evenly split between those in grades K-8 and those in grades 9–12. Historically, the eSchool has accepted students from across the state, but it has recently instituted a blended learning approach to instruction that requires face-to-face attendance at least once a month, limiting enrollment to Middleton District resident students and those students who reside in neighboring school districts. The eSchool also provides supplemental online courses for students across the district in grades 6–12 using both local teachers and the WEN network. Students in traditional high schools can take up to two courses online each semester, and students who are considered to be full-time online students can take up to two classes in a school building.

Initially, the K–5 full-time online program contracted with a private provider (K–12, Inc.) to supply online curriculum and teachers. However, the eSchool has managed the program with local teachers for the past two years. After attempting to settle on a single curriculum, the eSchool found that using several content providers works best for its students and teachers. Elementary students study primarily online, but come to the school at least once per week to meet with a teacher and to participate in academic and social opportunities.



MCPASD has developed a broad range of online and blended learning options and models, including online courses that supplement students' schedules in traditional schools, courses with variable required attendance on campus, summer school blended learning courses for credit recovery, and the project-based Clark Street Charter School for grades 9–12 math courses using WEN. The blended learning approach expanded to include Personal Finance and health content in 2015.

The MCPASD Education Services team designed the “Disruptive Innovators” pilot program to encourage teachers to use digital content and tools, and more importantly to identify ways to give students an active voice and role in their own learning. Interested teachers were required to work with library media and/or technology integration specialists to design a pilot project for consideration. Project proposals from both middle school buildings and from four of six elementary buildings were accepted. Results and implementation details of the pilot programs were shared and best practices have been captured for other teachers to emulate.

The eSchool is staffed by a half-time Principal, who manages the K–12 enriched virtual program and supports integration of blended models in traditional classrooms, an eSchool counselor (0.8 FTE), a full-time para-educator, to support students working in the eSchool room, and a part-time administrative assistant. eSchool overcame resource allocation and teacher contract issues as it scaled from one online teacher in 2011 to over 25 in FY 2015–2016. A key step was working with the local teacher’s union to approve a pay-per-student enrollment provision in addition to FTE allocation. Previously, the only option was to make teaching an online course part of the school day, which created budgeting and scheduling difficulties and did not adequately compensate teachers for the additional time and effort required to learn the nuances of online teaching. With the contract changes, online teachers receive \$150 per student per semester enrollment. The contract change has motivated teachers to increase their understanding of online learning and instruction and grow more comfortable with technology.

“Our partnership with WEN and the WDLC has given us access to certified online teachers in a wide variety of subjects while we developed our own cadre of teachers locally,” said Jill Gurtner, Principal, Clark Street Community School and 21st Century eSchool. “WEN has also given us access to high quality digital resources and technology tools at a reasonable cost, and support for district and building level roll out of blended learning initiatives.

Oshkosh Area SCHOOL DISTRICT

COURSE ENROLLMENTS: 271 (FY 2014–2015)
NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 185 (FY 2014–2015)
GRADE LEVELS SERVED: 6–12
GROWTH RATE: 41% (from FY 2012–2014 course enrollments)
STAFFING: 0.5 FTE

The Oshkosh Area School District (OASD) began providing online courses primarily to high school students seeking flexibility in their course schedules. Over the past four years as a WEN partner, OASD has enrolled middle and high school students in approximately 1,200 Network courses, primarily through the Oshkosh eACADEMY. The district has a policy limiting students to two online classes per semester; therefore, the eACADEMY does not have any full-time students.

The OASD started with online courses in health, expanded into other subject areas, and is now supporting blended learning approaches in the classroom. The District has significantly upgraded the technology infrastructure across the district to support a 1:1 device strategy, with all high school students receiving devices in 2015 and with middle school students receiving devices in fall 2016. The OASD has implemented a new district-wide learning management system (LMS) to deliver online content in addition to the LMS provided

through WEN. The use of more than one LMS across a district is unusual, but the OASD and the eACADEMY believe this prepares their students for using a variety of technology tools over their lifetimes.

In partnership with Fox Valley Technical College, eACADEMY offers dual credit online opportunities for high school students. The dual credit program started with a business and information technology course and now OASD and Fox are developing policies and procedures to expand the number of online dual enrollment opportunities. The OASD also offers a computer-based credit recovery program using a provider outside WEN. Those students are not included in the course enrollment data presented in this report.



Lisa Lieder, eACADEMY Online Coordinator, explains how the district and WEN work together. “As a WEN partner, the eACADEMY focuses on academics while the WEN staff focuses on business relationships and operations. The eAcademy has heightened the awareness of digital instruction among the governing board, staff, students, and parents. Also, our online educators have access to a variety of professional growth opportunities. We could not maintain the quality online programming we have without the support and state advocacy we receive from WEN and WDLC.”

An eACADEMY challenge has been supporting the online learning program with limited staffing. Initially, the program was supported solely by a high school principal with no additional staff. In 2013, one half-time staff position was created to manage the eACADEMY program, coordinate other alternative education programs and provide alternative education counseling. Additional support for the eACADEMY, listed below, comes from various sources across the district, but are not part of the school's FTE staff.

- A principal at a local high school provides administrative support for the online program.
- The eACADEMY registrar provides support for the online program while also serving as administrative assistant for two assistant high school principals and the Dean of Students.
- Two coaches serve as eAcademy mentors and as lead teachers in the learning labs that are primarily used for credit recovery.

The eACADEMY has 11 online instructors including three who teach course sections through the Network, aggregating online students from other WEN member districts. The maximum FTE allocated for instructors of online courses is .2 FTE. All online teachers are employed on a part-time basis in addition to their traditional teaching loads. The compensation model is based on student enrollment. A teacher with 1–5 online students is paid \$1,300 per a semester. The amount increases \$1,000 for each additional five students (e.g. for 6–10 students an online instructor earns \$2,300). Online teachers earn an additional \$164 per semester for their first year of online teaching. All funding is channeled through district online funds rather than a school's allocated funds. Summer school online instructors are paid an hourly rate of \$23.50, equal to face-to-face summer school instruction pay.

Racine United SCHOOL DISTRICT

COURSE ENROLLMENTS: 921 (FY 2014–2015)
NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 622 (FY 2014–2015)
GRADE LEVELS SERVED: 5–12
GROWTH RATE: 52% (from FY 2012–2014 course enrollments)
STAFFING: 8.0 FTE

The Racine Unified School District (RUSD) provides online learning services for all of the district's 33 schools. RUSD had over 900 online course enrollments in grades 5–12 during the FY 2014–2015 with an online course catalog that ranges from elementary level to Advanced Placement for high school students. In addition to working with WEN for online courses, RUSD uses a variety of online curriculum vendors for specific needs. The district offers computer-based credit recovery for over 1,500 students at the high school level. (Credit recovery program enrollments are not reflected in the course enrollment data for this report.) Students at alternative education program sites may take computer-based instruction courses for original credit in addition to their face-to-face courses. Embedding online options into the schools has reduced the complexity of operating a separate virtual charter school.

The district's decision to join WEN has helped accelerate its initially slow move into online learning. The RUSD Board of Education first authorized the district's participation in online learning partnerships within Wisconsin in 2002, but as of 2011 the district still had fewer than 10 students participating in online learning each year. That year, an online administrator was hired to expand online learning in the district, and RUSD joined WEN as an Invested Partner. The first RUSD online teacher and 50 students participated in online learning courses during summer 2011. Eighteen months later, Racine Digital and Virtual Learning staff had grown to four full-time and three part-time teachers serving about 350 students in supplemental online courses.

"By joining WEN as an Invested Partner in 2011, the Racine Unified School District was able to immediately access a catalog of 300 online courses and access the expertise of the network members," recalls Kelly Pochop, RUSD Virtual Learning Coordinator. "The low cost of membership, access to experience and knowledge, and ability to grow quickly with our own model could not have been replicated by doing the work ourselves or by joining any other organization."



A core reason that the district has embedded digital learning services in its schools, instead of creating a separate virtual school, is the district's growing interest in and readiness to support blended learning as teachers become comfortable with the instructional model and technology. There are over 30 "pockets of disruption" throughout the district, ranging from the district-wide initiatives for credit recovery (after school, summer school, during the school day) to over 300 a la carte online courses to support personalized learning plans for students whose needs are not being met in traditional classrooms.

The district is experimenting with a number of blended learning models to design and implement into various district digital learning studios, allowing students to attend courses throughout the day and evening. These studios can be reconfigured as needed with flexible seating, tables, conference rooms and private offices. Also, new Academies of Racine will be implemented at three high schools in Fall 2016 with block scheduling and

career academy pathways, adding an additional course block for every student during their secondary years. Students will be expected to fill some of these schedule openings with online learning options in AP, electives, and especially to fulfill the Career and Technical Education graduation requirement where teacher availability is a challenge. Students will have a selection of online courses, specific to their needs, that they will be able to access from school or from home. "The district is building toward support of digital learning formats on a school-by-school basis through these smaller disruptions in traditional instruction," notes Pochop.

Digital and Virtual Learning has an administrative team of three full-time staff members (director, coordinator, and registrar) who work with district and building administrators and teachers to integrate digital learning across RUSD. Over 70 Online Content Teachers facilitate online courses in addition to their teaching assignments during the school day. They teach online as part-time staff after the school day, much like a sports coach or band, chorus or theater director. These teachers are paid a flat fee of \$226 per student per semester course enrollment. There are also five full-time Online Mentor Teachers, three embedded in district high schools and two who move around the district. Students may never see an Online Content Teacher during their online experience (although they communicate online), but Mentor Teachers work with students face-to-face, provide instructional support, and serve as exam proctors. Online Mentor Teachers are paid under the normal teacher contract. The Mentor Teacher role has been a key factor in allowing the district to scale from 0 to 70 Online Content Teachers in just five years. The district also employs 11 teachers to facilitate instruction at seven after school credit recovery sites and 30 teachers for summer school credit recovery at three high school sites. Racine District leadership made a substantial commitment to teacher professional learning in 2010 that included attendance at national digital learning conferences, as well as sending 150 teachers through the Online Facilitation course provided by WEN over the past four years.

Other key strategies in the district's readiness to integrate instructional technology in schools include the proliferation of student devices and a technology infrastructure to support those devices. The district maintains a 1:4 ratio of devices to students at most schools and recently added over 5,000 Chromebooks to allow more flexibility in classes. RUSD considers library spaces to be a key to future growth of virtual learning. High school libraries are currently used for conducting credit recovery courses, but the library will become a hub in the building where students, in a variety of virtual courses and blended models, can be supported. The libraries are currently transitioning from traditional warehouses of books to vibrant common spaces.

Sheboygan Area SCHOOL DISTRICT

COURSE ENROLLMENTS: 393 (FY 2014–2015)

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 185 (FY 2014–2015)

GRADE LEVELS SERVED: 9–12

GROWTH RATE: -13% (from FY 2012–2014 course enrollments)

STAFFING: 7.0 FTE

George D. Warriner High School for Personalized Learning is a public charter school within the Sheboygan Area School District that offers each student personalized educational opportunities with an emphasis on innovation and technology. Warriner High School (WHS) enrolls about 30 students on a full-time basis each year. In addition, 60% of George D. Warriner Middle School students complete advanced high school level courses prior to entering 9th grade. WHS is the sole provider of supplemental online courses for other schools in the district.

WHS benefits students who have struggled in a large school setting by blending online options and project-based learning, with face-to-face traditional campus experiences. Although WHS uses WEN for a significant portion of its supplemental online courses, none of the WHS students are enrolled strictly in WEN courses. Students can select from a variety of online courses offered through WEN and Compass Learning as well as courses developed by Warriner teachers in the Haiku Learning environment. Two of the benefits the Sheboygan District enjoys as part of the Network are the flexibility to choose online content that best meets the needs of students and the ability to access WEN support and services.

WHS students usually meet two or three days a week on campus for face-to-face instruction and work online the remainder of the week. Every Warriner online student has an assigned advisor and access to a school counselor. To ensure academic success, WHS online students meet with their advisor bi-weekly either face-to-face or via an online video chat. Supplemental online students from other Sheboygan schools are monitored and advised by the school counselor, and have the option to meet with teachers and advisors on the WHS campus.

WHS has a large instruction area for students who prefer to study their online course while on campus. The study area is staffed by a teacher who is available to give students one-on-one assistance. The school also has two small group instruction areas that are used for blended learning classes, career and college readiness courses, project based learning, and student presentations.



“We appreciate the individual support and in-service opportunities offered by the WEN staff in regard to online coursework and blended learning,” said Duane Simmons, Administrator at Warriner High School. “It has been very beneficial to be able to connect and dialogue with other invested partners so we can learn about the programs and innovations other schools are using. As an invested partner we are part of a group that is able to advocate for online learning at the state and local level through the WDLC.”

Another hallmark of Warriner High School is their Early College Program. Accelerated WHS students can take college courses in areas like Welding, Customer Service, Marketing, Certified Nursing Assistant, Culinary Arts, and Childcare Professional. In the spring of 2016 the first WHS student will graduate with a Warriner High School diploma and an associate’s degree from Lakeshore Technical College.

WHS now has five full-time advisors/teachers, a half-time counselor, a half-time special education teacher and a half-time administrator.

Wisconsin Virtual School

COURSE ENROLLMENTS: 5,511 (FY 2014–2015)

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 2,554 (FY 2014–2015)

GRADE LEVELS SERVED: 6–12

GROWTH RATE: 9% (from FY 2012–2014 course enrollments)

STAFFING: 4.8 FTE

Wisconsin Virtual School (WVS) is one of the oldest supplemental online programs in the state, originating out of the Cooperative Educational Services Area 9 (CESA 9) in 2000. Through a partnership between the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and CESA 9, WVS operates independently to meet the statutory requirement for DPI to provide a Wisconsin web academy, which offers online courses for public, private, and charter school students. WVS has served over 27,000 course enrollments to date and has enrolled students from about two-thirds of Wisconsin's school districts. In 2012, DPI announced the Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative as a partnership between WVS, DPI and WEN to better meet the needs of students across Wisconsin. WVS became a WEN member in 2014 in part to gain cost efficiencies in online course content and technology infrastructure, but it continues its role as the primary statewide supplemental online learning provider to schools and districts. WVS course enrollments through May 2016 of FY 2015–2016 surpassed all of FY 2014–2015 course enrollments by 17%.

WVS partners with school districts to deliver supplemental online courses to middle and high school students in practically any core subject area and course type, including world languages, electives, Advanced Placement and dual enrollment. WVS also provides course registration and student tracking, Wisconsin-certified online teachers, technical support, training and professional learning for teachers and administrators, online program planning and implementation support, and policy development. WVS allows districts to use state-sponsored supplemental online courses and associated services with no upfront fee, membership or required level of investment. WVS is a good starting point for districts, and as they grow their online and blended enrollments they can become WEN Affiliate members.

By providing all of these services, WVS gives schools an easy and immediate path to online course options for students who have a variety of needs. These needs include situations in which courses are not offered locally, students have scheduling conflicts, students are home-schooled or homebound, students are living outside the home district due to sports, acting, study abroad, or other reasons, students need courses for acceleration, enrichment, or credit recovery, and/or students who have been expelled. Each district maintains control of local enrollments and policies concerning eligibility for WVS classes and awards credit upon course completion. WVS recruits, trains and provides ongoing professional learning for its online teachers, but districts can use their own teachers while using WVS online courses. WVS is not a virtual charter school; it does not grant diplomas nor issue credit, nor is it part of a school district. There are no minimum enrollments for districts to use WVS courses and there are no contracts or membership fees.

Districts have worked with WVS to expand and implement digital curriculum, assist students who are searching for online options, develop blended or hybrid learning models, retain local control over virtual education policies and procedures, and develop a virtual program without heavily investing in staff, content development, hardware purchases and maintenance, and curricular updates.

WEN membership allowed WVS to reduce course fees to districts by 10% for FY 2015–2016 while expanding the services it provides to districts. WVS now offers college test prep (ACT, Aspire, and AP Exam reviews) and online tutoring to support students outside the school day.



Dawn Nordine, WVS Executive Director, explains how joining WEN has helped WVS. “Our membership in WEN has resulted in cost savings and allowed WVS to reduce fees to districts across the state. Collaboration with other members increased the quality of services for schools and improved both our professional learning and our content and software procurement and development.”

WVS has four full-time staff: an Executive Director, Director, and two Program Support Assistants. There is also an Associate Director at .8 FTE along with 60-plus online teacher consultants from across Wisconsin.

WVS had two districts participating in blended learning pilots during FY 2015–2016 with two additional districts planning similar pilots for Fall 2016. Blended learning pilots build on existing WVS services and the new ways districts are using online course content and services. As part of a blended learning study, WVS is providing Phelps School District, a long-time WVS supplemental course user, with access to most of its content and its learning management system for Phelps teachers to use in their classrooms. This approach creates a new option for Phelps teachers, as explained by Dr. Delnice Hill, Phelps District Administrator. “Blended learning has been a powerful initiative for our staff. All of our staff participated in an in-service to improve their skills when using a [blended] format in their classroom. A portion of our lead teachers went on to participate in further professional learning regarding blended learning and came back to share what they learned ... All aspects of this pilot project continue to work very well for our District and students!”

WVS worked for several years with an Algoma School District teacher to support blended learning instruction prior to launching the formal blended learning pilot study. The Algoma District is now recruiting and training teachers for the blended learning pilot that will start in Fall 2016. Algoma teachers and administrators attended the Wisconsin Blended Learning Summit, hosted by WDLC, during the spring 2016 to help them plan and implement blended learning models in the district.

The Supplemental Pathway

The Wisconsin Virtual School (WVS) is an important partner in the WDLC's effort to provide a Supplemental Pathway to all districts in the state. As a founding WDLC partner and Invested Partner in WEN, WVS is the primary supplemental online course provider to districts that want to offer online options for their students, but may not yet have a cohesive online learning plan in place. WVS makes state-supported online learning opportunities available to the 396 Wisconsin school districts that are not part of WEN. WVS allows districts that may not be ready for either the Invested or Affiliate Pathways to add flexibility to their digital programs through the Supplemental Pathway. It is a straight-forward way to add quality online courses to a district's existing grade 6–12 curriculum.

In the Supplemental Pathway, districts pay per enrollment for WVS courses and services. As the volume of a district's enrollments and commitment to online and blended learning grow, it may warrant the investment to become a WEN member. When a district becomes a WEN Affiliate Partner it pays an annual membership fee (\$8,000) to access Network courses, teachers and other services on a prorated basis. See the WVS profile earlier in this report for additional information about the online courses and services provided by WVS.

An example of a program that benefitted from the flexibility and low initial investment provided by the Supplemental Pathway is the Rural Virtual Academy (RVA), which is a consortium of Wisconsin school districts. RVA was an early user of courses and instruction from WVS, and has grown into the Affiliate model. "The Supplemental Pathway to digital course content through WVS served our school and partnering districts as a turnkey solution for those in need of low volume course enrollments and high quality digital curriculum supported by outstanding support staff and teachers," notes Charles Heckel, Principal of the Rural Virtual Academy. RVA course enrollments have grown to a point where the consortium joined WEN as an Affiliate Partner in 2015.

Through the experience and resources of WVS, the WDLC offers all districts equitable and affordable access to online and blended instruction through the Supplemental Pathway.

The Affiliate Pathway

The WEN Affiliate Partner pathway was created in 2012 as a way to equitably extend the reach of WEN to more districts across the state. Affiliate Partners join WEN at a lower level of annual investment (\$8,000) and benefits than Invested Partners, but a higher level than the districts using WEN via the Supplemental Pathway. Affiliate members have access to WEN online courses, shared instruction, technology infrastructure, and access to high quality content from numerous vendors at lower costs.

Most of WEN's current 14 district members (Table 3 below) are small to medium-sized school districts, ranging from less than 1,000 students (Chetek-Weyerhaeuser Area School District) to nearly 7,000 students (School District of La Crosse). A few have virtual charter schools or consortia that serve multiple districts. Although they are diverse in size, geography, community composition, and stage of development of their online learning programs, all seek to increase online course offerings and explore effective new learning models. Most Affiliates have or are in the process of developing cohesive and comprehensive online learning plans.

TABLE 3: **Affiliate Partner districts**

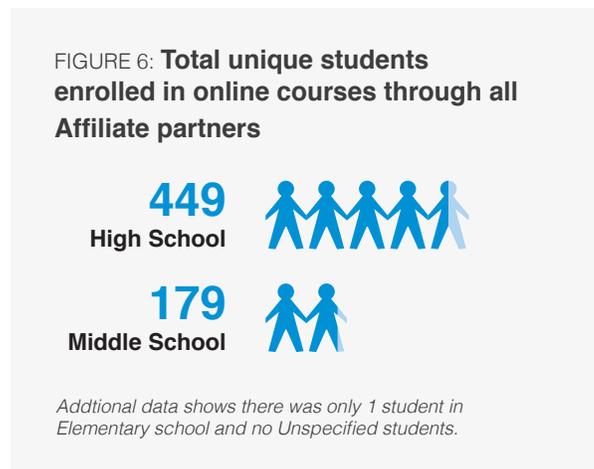
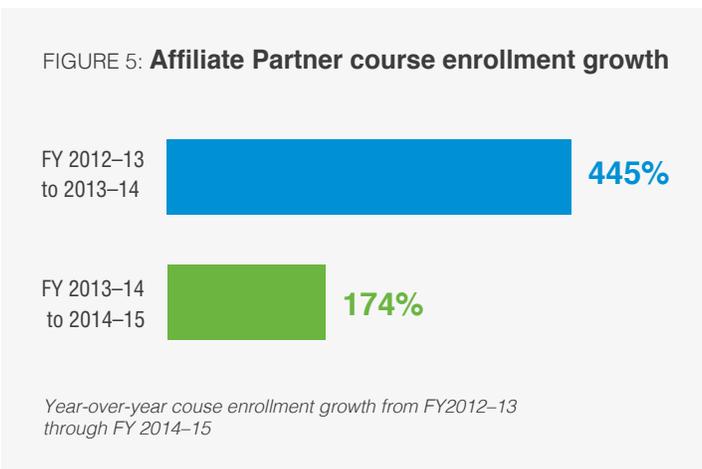
School District	Total District Students (FY 2013–2014)	Community Served	Has Virtual Charter School(s)	WEN Partner Since
School District of Cameron	1,116	Rural	Yes	2012
Chetek-Weyerhaeuser Area School District	959	Rural	Yes	2013
DeForest Area School District	3,522	Town	No	2012
Franklin Public School District	4,418	Suburb	No	2015
Gillett School District	7,492	Rural	No	2015
Kewaskum School District	1,856	Town	No	2013
School District of La Crosse	6,829	City, small	No	2014
Medford School District	2,224	Town	Yes	2015
Oregon School District	3,793	Town	No	2014
River Valley School District	1,337	Rural	No	2013
School District of Superior	4,667	City, small	No	2014
Watertown Unified School District	3,864	City, small	No	2015
Waunakee Community School District	4,042	City, small	No	2012
Waupun Area School District	1,926	City, small	No	2015

Medford School District authorizes the Rural Virtual Academy, a consortium of 15 districts. Total enrollment for the districts in the RVA consortium is 16,820. The Gillett School District is home to the Triton Network, a consortium of 10 school districts totaling 7,942 students.

The Affiliate Partners are diverse, but share core attributes that make WEN membership a logical investment. All have a desire to honor local autonomy, grow through collaboration, and realize cost savings. Affiliates share the following goals and commitments:

- Build a digital learning program while retaining local control.
- Ensure local leadership and ownership of the online program, with a designated person to lead the program.
- Provide a comprehensive online learning program to supplement local curriculum and course offerings that meets the diverse needs of students.
- Build local online teacher capacity to grow the district knowledge base and increase expertise in online and blended learning.
- Provide teachers for the Network to support “Statewide Enrollments” in online courses.
- Bolster the purchasing power of WEN, providing online learning resources beyond what any single Affiliate Partner district can accomplish individually.

Online course enrollments totaled 1,867 for Affiliate Partners in FY 2014–2015, and it is estimated that Affiliate partner total online course enrollments for FY 2015–2016 will exceed 2,500. The charts below show yearly growth of course enrollments since the FY 2012–2013 and the number of students taking online courses by grade level in FY 2014–2015.



While Affiliate partners enjoy local control and autonomy, there is a significant amount of collaboration among partners, often facilitated by WEN. Districts can maximize efficiencies, save time and resources, and minimize missteps by sharing challenges and solutions, and learning from colleagues having more experience in online learning implementation. Terryn Wingler-Petty, Local Education Guide for the Chetek-Weyerhaeuser Area School District, values the opportunities WEN provides the district. She notes, “Collaboration and sharing teaching staff! Through WEN our students enjoy access to a large number of courses that we cannot support at the local level. The collaboration between the network and other members has been a tremendous asset as our program has grown and developed over the years.”

The most successful Affiliate online programs have developed specific objectives and cohesive goals with their administrators and boards. The School District of Superior began its Affiliate Partnership in the fall of 2015 and it

is starting to work more closely with the Network, anticipating a larger adoption in the fall of 2016. Kelly Bergum, high school counselor and coordinator of the online program, is planning to offer new online options for students. He says, “We are putting together a district plan on how to best serve all of our students through the use of technology. Developing a local option is a central part of the strategy. Without being a partner of WEN, we would not be having these discussions.”

The Affiliate Partner program is also a key part of sustainability for WEN. Soon after WEN became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 2011, its board conducted a financial assessment to help Invested Partners plan the future of the organization. The initial financial investments made by the Invested Partners for online content and technology were fundamental to the initial success of the organization. In an effort to help ensure long-term sustainability WEN expanded its program to include an Affiliate Partner level. They recognized that an additional number of school districts also had the resources and student population to benefit from WEN services and warrant membership, but not at the same level of investment as the Invested Partners. After benchmarking a number of national and regional programs, the WEN board approved a path to sustainability through the Affiliate Partner Pathway.

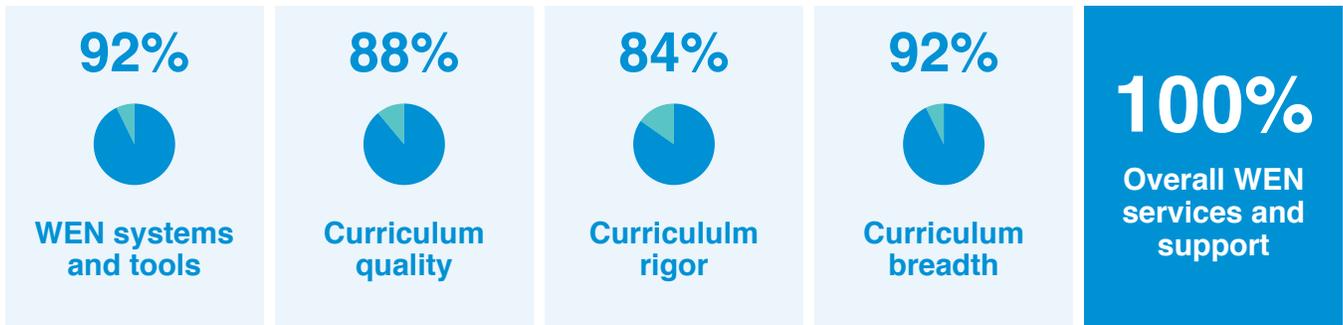
The guiding principles that make the Wisconsin eSchool Network successful for all partners include local autonomy, equitable access and collaboration, with cost and investment remaining proportional. Still, a priority in developing the Affiliate Partner program was to recognize the voice of the Invested Partners that made the large financial investments while welcoming districts interested in WEN partnership that lack the resources or enrollments to warrant an Invested Partner role. Services and support available to partners is equivalent based on the needs and strategic objectives of any individual partner, but with some differentiation in program operations, access, and pricing.

Conclusion

The WDLC model of providing online and blended learning courses through a collaboration of partner organizations guided by school districts is unusual compared to most other digital learning models. This model has proven to be sustainable and flexible, allowing districts to invest in digital learning at different levels. The Supplemental, Affiliate and Invested Pathways provide equitable access to any size or type of district at any stage of its online and blended learning development. Through WEN, the WDLC maintains course quality and extends options by working with many content and technology vendors while giving districts the autonomy to develop their own resources and use their own teachers.

District satisfaction with the Network indicates the needs of districts and schools are being met by this approach. In a survey of 26 of the 28 WEN partner districts, most were pleased with the courses, technology and support they receive.

FIGURE 7: **WEN District Partner Satisfaction Survey**



Supplemental Pathway districts are equally pleased with WVS online courses and services. The results of a survey of over 100 districts using WVS for supplemental online courses are provided below:

FIGURE 8: **WVS Satisfaction Survey**



The WDLC works to foster district leadership and vision, program quality, and collaboration with the people who make online and blended learning successful at the local level. The WDLC will continue to expand its online course catalog, the base of online and blended learning vendors, and professional learning opportunities to support districts in their building of local capacity and expertise. The near-term focus will be on content, instructional pedagogies and collaboration, while licensing the latest and most appropriate technologies. To address the ever-changing needs and opportunities presented by digital learning, the Collaborative and its partners will invest and evolve as directed by the educators of Wisconsin.

Glossary of Terms

Digital learning is any instructional practice in or out of school that uses computer technology. Our use of the term is broad and not limited to online, blended, and related learning. Digital learning encompasses a wide range of computer-based tools and practices, including instructional content, interactions, data and assessment systems, learning platforms, online courses, adaptive software, personal learning enabling technologies, and student data management systems.

An **online course** is a full course education experience in which instruction takes place primarily over the Internet, using an online delivery system to provide access to course content. It may be accessed from multiple settings (in a school building and/or out of a school building). A certificated teacher is the teacher of record for the course.

Supplemental online courses are used to augment a student's educational program or campus class schedule. Students taking supplemental online courses usually take about 1 or 2 online courses in a school year.

A **hybrid course** is one in which much of the learning and instruction takes place online, with the student and teacher separated geographically, but still includes some traditional face-to-face "seat time."

Blended learning is "a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online learning, with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace; at least in part in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home; ..." (The Clayton Christensen Institute for Disruptive Innovation). In most blended learning models, the teacher of record is located in the school building, whereas in online learning the teacher of record is almost always remote.

Full-time online students are those who take their entire course load online. The typical WDLC full-time student is usually a resident of the district authorizing the online school.

A **statewide enrollment or section** is an online course where the student and the instructor come from different districts. Among WEN partners, an average of 90% of online courses are taught by local teachers and the use of statewide sections are generally used when local options are not available.

A **course enrollment** is one student in a single semester-long course.

A **unique student** is one individual student, who may take any number of online courses.

A **Virtual charter school** in the State of Wisconsin is [defined](#) as a school under contract with a school board under Wisconsin statute s. 118.40 in which all or a portion of the instruction is provided through means of the Internet, and the pupils enrolled in and instructional staff employed by the school are geographically remote from each other.

Virtual charter schools are publicly funded, nonsectarian schools that are exempt from many regulations that apply to traditional public schools and that offer some of their classes online. They began operating in Wisconsin during the 2002-03 school year. Pupils typically attend from their homes and communicate with teachers using e-mail, by telephone, or in online discussions.

WEN Invested Partner virtual charter schools differ from the national model in several important ways. A majority of WEN Invested Partner districts and some Affiliated Partners have established virtual charter schools to supply most of the online learning needs for resident students, both in supplemental and full time options. In all WEN Virtual Charter Schools, the teachers and staff are employees of the district.

Credit recovery refers to "a wide variety of educational strategies and programs that give high school students who have failed a class the opportunity to redo coursework or retake a course through alternate means, and thereby avoid failure and earn academic credit." (Glossary of Educational Reform)

A **Learning Management System (LMS)** is a software application for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting and delivery of electronic educational technology (also called e-learning) courses or training programs.

